

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: PSI SECRETARY MOVES TO AFFIRM SOCIALIST AUTONOMY

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

SUMMARY. PSI SECRETARY CRAXI IS MOVING IN THREE SEPARATE AREAS TO RE-EMPHASIZE SOCIALIST AUTONOMY. HE HAS ACHIEVED IDENTIFICATION OF THE PSI WITH THE MAINSTREAM OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISM, IS MOVING HIS PARTY TO DEFINITION OF CLEARER POSITIONS ON THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES, AND WISHES TO TAKE A STRONGER HAND IN THE LABOR FIELD. THIS EFFORT DEPENDS UPON AN UNEASY COALITION OF 40-YEAR OLDS, AND MAY RUN INTO INCREASING OPPOSITION FROM A FRONT BUILT
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AROUND EX-SECRETARY DE MARTINO. THE DC STANDS TO BENEFIT

FROM CONTINUATION OF CRAXI'S LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY BETTINO CRAXI SEEMS TO BE MOVING HIS PARTY WITH SOME SKILL TOWARD DEFINITION OF A SOCIALIST IMAGE AUTONOMOUS FROM BOTH THE COMMUNISTS AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. HIS EFFORTS ARE ARTICULATED IN AT LEAST THREE AREAS. FIRST, HE IS ACHIEVING IDENTIFICATION OF THE PSI WITH THE MAIN CURRENTS OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM. THE ITALIAN PRESS GAVE WIDE COVERAGE TO CRAXI'S APPEARANCE AT A GERMAN ELECTION RALLY WITH SPD PRESIDENT WILLY BRANDT AND TO BRANDT'S PRAISE OF THE PSI AS A "BROTHER PARTY." THIS SUCCESSFUL VISIT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY MEETINGS IN THE NEAR FUTURE BETWEEN CRAXI AND BRITISH PM CALLAGHAN AND FRENCH SOCIALIST LEADER MITTERAND.

2. SECONDLY, THE PSI IS TRYING TO CARVE OUT DISTINCT POSITIONS ON SPECIFIC CURRENT ISSUES. IN THIS RESPECT, THE SEPT. 21-22 SEMINAR ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES IS MOST NOTABLE. THE GATHERING OF PARLIAMENTARIANS, REGIONAL LEADERS AND EXPERTS IS DESIGNED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEFINITION OF ANTI-CRISIS MEASURES AND TO DEVELOP POLICIES FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT. THE PSI HAS ALSO HAD SOME SUCCESS IN DISPLAYING INDEPENDENCE ON THE ISSUES OF ABORTION, REVISION OF THE CONCORDAT WITH THE VATICAN, AND THE LOCKHEED SCANDAL.

3. FINALLY, CRAXI IS DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH AN AUTONOMOUS PSI PRESENCE IN THE LABOR FIELD. ALTHOUGH THE RATHER CLUMSEY ATTEMPT TO REPLACE UIL SECRETARY-GENERAL VANNI (PRI) WITH SOCIALIST GIORGIO BENVENUTO SEEMS TO HAVE FAILED, LABOR SOURCES TELL US THAT THE EFFORT WILL CONTINUE, PERPHAPS WITH A CANDIDATE OTHER THAN BENVENUTO. WE HAVE SEEN INDICATIONS THAT THE RIGHT KIND OF SOCIALIST APPROACH, PERHAPS EVEN PSI SUPPORT FOR A PSDI CANDIDATE AS SECRETARY-GENERAL, MIGHT FIND A POSITIVE RECEPTION IN THE UIL.

4. IN SUMMARY, CRAXI'S INITIAL MANEUVERS HAVE BEEN SKILLFUL AND HELPFUL FOR THE FUTURE OF ITALIAN DEMOCRACY AND OF THE PSI. SO FAR, HE HAS BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO UPSET HIS UNEASY, PRAGMATIC INTRA-PARTY COALITION BY RAISING THE ISSUE OF BASIC IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION. INSTEAD, HE HAS MOVED TO CONSOLIDATE PARTY INFRA-CONFIDENTIAL

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STRUCTURE AND STRENGTHEN GRASS-ROOTS ORGANIZATION. OBVIOUSLY, THE COALITION OF 40-YEAR OLDS SURROUNDING CRAXI FINDS AGREEMENT ON STRUCTURE EASIER THAN ON IDEOLOGY. AT THE SAME TIME, AN ANTI-CRAXI FORMATION IS CRYSTALLIZING AROUND FORMER LEADER FRANCESCO DE MARTINO. WHILE CRAXI HAS CONSISTENTLY REFRAINED FROM ATTACKING PM ANDREOTTI, OPENLY DISTRUSTS THE PCI AND LEAVES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DC, DE MARTINO SEES AS "PRE-EXISTENT" THE CONDITIONS FOR PCI-PSI FUSION

AND CALLS THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT THE PSI WANTS. WHEN THE IDEOLOGICAL BATTLE IS FINALLY JOINED, CRAXI WILL BE HEAVILY DEPENDENT UPON OTHER FORCES WITHIN THE PSI, ESPECIALLY GIACOMO MANCINI. UNLESS CRAXI PROVES A SKILLFUL COMPROMISER AND TACTICIAN, THE PSI WILL FIND DIFFICULTY IN ENUNCIATING A CLEAR PARTY LINE WITH REGARD TO THE DC, THE PCI AND FUTURE GOVERNING FORMULAS. IT WOULD SEEM ADVANTAGEOUS FOR THE DC TO BUILD SOCIALIST CONFIDENCE BY CONSULTING CLOSELY WITH THE PSI AND TO DO WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO ADVANCE CRAXI'S STANDING IN GENERAL. THE PSI'S IDEOLOGICAL CHOICE WILL BE A VERY SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE TRANSITION TO A MORE SOLID GOVERNMENT IN ITALY. VOLPE

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